Hib. 7. 661. 5

A Case of Conscience propounded to a great Bishop in *Ireland*, *Viz.*

Whether after Divorce, the innocent Party may not lawfully Marry.

With the Bishop's Answer to the

QUESTION:

AND

A Reply to the Bishops Answer.

And also some Quæries, Whether the Silencing of Godly Ministers be not near of kin to the killing of the two Prophets, *Revelation* the 11. chap:

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By George Pressicke *of Dublin.* Sadler. 1901

~~He wrote against Patient y^t Anabaptist.~~

He that justifieth the Wicked, and he that condemneth the Just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord. Proverbs 17. 15.

Printed for the Author in *March*, 1661.

Pickering
April 1901

Ireland

To the Reader.

Christian friends,

YOu may understand by what followes that I propounded a Case of Conscience to a great Bishop in Ireland, by way of petition; but had a very slight Answer: whereupon I went to my Chamber, and writ to him a large Letter, wherein I did hint to him that I had not written and printed three Books against Anabaptists and Quakers to be put off with such an Answer as he had given me; and did urge him from that Text 1 Peter 3. 15. that I did conceive he was bound in conscience and duty to God, to answer to the Question, which I desired might be in writing: which after he had read, he gave order I should come to his house and he would answer it; which I did, and drew up the substance of my Petition and Letter into certain Questions and Arguments; which hereafter followeth, together with his Answer, and my Reply to his Answer. And seeing I could have no further satisfaction, I thought good to put all in Print to publike view, that the understanding Reader may consider and judge, That if I should take another Wife (as I do intend for any thing I yet know to hinder me) whether there be not sufficient ground of Scripture for me so to do, besides the example and practice of other Churches, Reasons and Arguments shewed to prove the lawfullnesse thereof. And if one or more be otherwise minded, I may say as Peter and Iohn said in another case, Acts 4. 19. Whether it is right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye. So I say, whether should I be concluded by one or some few Mens opinions, contrary to the Word of God and the practice of Protestant Churches, and so be lyable to continuall temptations all my life long, or take that liberty which the Word of God and former Protestant Churches hath allowed, that I may escape Satans snares, and have a remedy against my owne Corruption, Judge ye. Thus I leave all to your charitable constructions, and am according to that measure I have received,

A lover of the Truth

George Presticke.

07 - 1357

A Caſe of Conſcience propounded &c. *vizt.* whether a Man whoſe wife hath forſaken him ſeven years and five months without any juſt cauſe, and will not be reconciled; and he having ſatisfied the Law ſo far that by his Majeſties Reference to two Biſhops in London) he hath a Divorce under the Biſhops hands, whether he may not lawfully Marry.

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Mr. *Preſſicke* to the Byſhop.

Right reverend Father in God,

I Have according to my weak ability drawne up the chief Heads of my petition and Letter into a more orderly Forme than before, that your Lordſhip may with leſſe trouble conſider of it, and God Almighty direct you therein.

And firſt, If the Law of God ſay, 1 *Cor.* 7. 15. *If the unbelieving will depart, let him depart a brother or a ſiſter is not under Bondage in ſuch caſes*: but if in ſuch a Caſe the innocent party have not liberty to marry, he muſt needs be in bondage ſtill.

2. If the Law of the Land allow, that if a Husband or Wife forſake one another ſeven years, and be not heard off, the innocent party may marry; then why may not I much more have liberty to marry, whoſe Wife hath forſaken me ſeven years and five months: for what more benefit have I of her, than if I did not heer whether ſhe were dead or living: yea more, I have a Divorce under two Biſhops Hands by a reference from his Majeſty: and

though it be not in Forme according to the Canon-Law, (for that had been many years silenced) but having his Majesties Royall Assent, (from whom the Canon-Law receives it's vigor and strength) doth supply that defect, as if it had been done by the Canon-Law.

3. If both the Law of God, as 1 *Cor.* 7. 15. and secondly if the Law of the Land (according to the practice of the Church of *England* as above) the benefit of which cannot in equity be denied me, there being no Law as your Lordship said to compell a wife to perform the duty of a wife. and thirdly (which is more) I having a Bill of Divorce. And fourthly the example and practice of the Church in *Germany* in the like case, who allowed *Galeatius* to marry because his wife refused to co-habit with him, as mine hath refused to co-habit with me, then why should I be hindered of my lawfull liberty more than others.

4. If there be no Law to compel a wife to her duty, as your Lordship said there is not, and if there be a Law to restrain the husband from his lawfull liberty, which the Word of God allowes him, and according to the practice of other Churches as above: then whether is that Law that restrains him (if any such Law there be) whether is it a just Law according to the word of God, or whether is it not rather against the word of God; and is not that Law (if there be any such) *a setting of their thresholds against Gods thresholds, and their Posts by Gods Posts*; Ezek. 43. 8. compared with *Isa.* 29. 13. *their fear towards me is taught by the precepts of men.* For such a law would destroy an Ordinance of God, that is, Marriage and Procreation, and one end for which man was created, that is, *That the wife should be in subjection to her husband, as the Church is to Christ.* Ephes. 5. 24.. But if this liberty be denied him, then must the husband be in subjection to his wifes humour, though she be a whore or an Infidell and of never so perverse a spirit, he must be kept in bondage, and laid open to all temptations, if not a necessity of sinning. 1 *Cor.* 7. 4. 5.

If it be objected that nothing but whoredome can divorce as some have ignorantly said.

5. To that I say that though there are other lawfull causes of divorce

divorce beſides whoredome; yet except the Biſhops made that divorce between me and my wife, upon the account of my wifes being a whore in Scripture-ſence, as I writ to them before they made that divorce, the Biſhops muſt needs fall under the breach of that Scripture, *Math.* 19. 6. *Thoſe whom God hath joyned together, let no man put aſunder.* for there can be no divorce from bed and board, (as ſome call it) but it is abſolutely againſt that Text: Except it be with conſent for a time, (1 *Cor.* 7. 5.) to give themſelves unto prayer; and come together again, leſt Satan tempt them for their incontinencie. But this divorce between me and my wife is not of this nature, and therefore contrary to the word of God; except it be upon the account of her whoredome in Scripture-ſence: for neither the conſent of the Parties, nor the conſent of the Biſhops can make that lawfull, which the word of God ſaith is unlawfull, *Mat.* 19. 6. *Thoſe whom God hath joyned together, let no man put aſunder.*

6. Now that ſhe is a whore in Scripture-ſence I prove is thus, *Judges* 19. 2. the text ſaith, The Levits wife played the whore againſt her husband, and departed from him four full months. but my wife hath departed from me ſeven years and five months; if the Levits wife had actually played the whore, ſhe ſhould by the Law have been ſtoned to death; *Levit.* 20. 10. neither had it been lawfull for him to have taken her againe, *Levit.* 21. 7. and 1 *Cor.* 6. 16. *He that is joyned to an harlot is one fleſh.* therefore it is conceived that the Levites wife departing from him without his conſent, it is in Scripture-ſenſe whoredome; for ſhe ought to have been in ſubjection to her husband, as the Church is to Chriſt. *Epheſ.* 5. 24. This truth is further confirmed by comparing this with *Prov.* 2. 17. where a harlot is deſcribed to be one that forſaketh her husband, and forgetteth the covenant of her God: ſome Margents ſay, ſhe forgetteth the promiſe of the marriage covenant; *Jer.* 3. 3. compared with the 20 verſe, *Thou hadſt a Whores fore-head, as a wife treacherouſly departeth from her husband:* theſe three Texts prove ſufficiently that a wife forſaking her husband is a whore in Scripture-ſence.

So that from the union that is between Chriſt and his Church

Eph. 5. 32. we may gather that as forſaking the Lord is called harlotry, *Iſa.* 1. 4. compared with the 20, 21. *They have forſaken the Lord, how is the faithfull Citie become an harlot.* even ſo a wife forſaking her husband is in Scripture-ſence whoredome: and God threatens to puniſh both with one and the ſame puniſhment, *Ezekiel* 16. 38. *I will judge thee as women that break wedlock and ſhed blood are judged.* and breaking wedlock and ſhedding blood are both the ſins of her that was my wife.

To conclude as Chriſt himſelfe ſaid, *Therefore whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them.* I beſeech you conſider it as if it were your caſe, what you would have others do unto you; and trouble not your ſelfe to anſwer, but grant me a Lycenſe to marry, which if you do, yet it can be no Preſident to others to follow, for no mans condition doth paralell mine.

Firſt, in regard of my wifes obſtinacy theſe ſeven years and five months, notwithſtanding all lawfull means that hath been uſed to reclaime her, and in that reſpect ſhe is worſe then moſt whores are; for few whores do altogether deny their husbands, though they company with other men as with their husbands.

Secondly, in her indeavouring to murther me, by ſtabbing at me with a knife, and cutting me in the face.

Thirdly, I have ſuffered twenty five dayes impriſonment by *Charles Fleetwood*, for taking hold of my wife, and deſiring to talke with her but one quarter of an hour, to know if ſhe could ſhew any reaſon why ſhe dealt ſo with me: beſides ſhe procured my impriſonment in *London* for 1700 pound, when I owed not one penny.

Fourthly, I have a Bill of divorce by vertue of his Majeſties reference to two Biſhops, and under the two Biſhops hands: all which conſidered, granting me a Lycenſe to marry can be no preſident for others to follow.

Novem: 12*th.* 1661.

Your Lordſhips moſt humble and unworthy ſervant

George Preſſicke.

The Biſhop's Anſwer.

Mr. Preſſicke;

I Have peruſed your Paper and I am ſtill of the ſame judgement I was; they who expound Scripture according to their own private fancies doe often change, but they who expound it in the ſame ſence which was deliverd to the Catholique Church with the Scripture, can hardly vary from themſelves.

To the firſt objection I acknowledge the words of Saint *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 7. 15. *If the unbelieving depart, let him depart; a brother or a ſiſter is not in bondage in ſuch caſes.* But there is a difference between the marriage of Infidels and the marrige of Chriſtians; the marriage of Infidels being only a civil Contract and may be diſſolved by conſent, the marriage of Chriſtians is moreover a ſigne of the Myſticall union between Chriſt and his Church, and therefore indiſſolvable.

ſecondly, You plead the law of the Land which alowes a woman to marry after her husband hath been ſeven years abſent: but you miſtake the Law, for if the husband be known to be living, ſeventeen years abſence will not make it lawfull for the wife to marry again; take an inſtance Mr. *Mole* was abſent above twenty years in the inquiſition, for his religion, yet his wife did not, ſhe could not marry again. The reaſon of your miſtake is this that if a man be not heard of in ſeven years, the Law preſumeth that he is dead, and death diſſolves the bond of marriage; yet if it appear that the former husband was not dead, he ought to be reſtor'd to his wife notwithſtanding her ſecond marriage.

thirdly, You prove nothing but preſume that ſince you have the law of God and the law of the Land for you, the precepts of Men cannot comptroll the law of God, but you erre every way, for you have neither the law of God for you nor the law of the Land, but both the law of God and the law of the Land are expreſly against you: hear ſaint *Marke* chap. 10. verſe 11. *Whoſoever ſhall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery againſt her.* the words

are generall and admit no evasion: hear saint *Luke* chap. 16. v. 18. *Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrye h another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marryeth her that is put away committeth adultery.* here is no restriction nor exception, indeed saint *Mathew* seemeth to have an exception *Mat.* 5. 32. *Whosoever shall put away his wife saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery.* and *Mat.* 19. 9. *Whosoever shall put away his wife except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery:* which two places have both the same sence. The exception, if it be an exception, and not rather a pure negation, extendeth it selfe only to the divorce, not at all to the second marriage: he that putteth away his wife without the cause of fornication, maketh her commit adultery: but if he put her away for fornication, she is the culpable cause of her own adultery, not he that puts her away justly: but having put her away, whether he may lawfully marry again without sinne, saint *Mathew* saith nothing, but saint *Marke* and saint *Luke* speak expresly that he cannot: yet even this place of saint *Mathew* (howsoever understood) speaks directly against your second marriage, for you do not so much as pretend that your wife hath committed adultery; and therefore by the undoubted consent of the three Evangelists you cannot marry again.

To this of the three Evangelists, adde likewise the testimony of St. *Paul*, *Rom.* 7. 2, 3. *The woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth, but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the Law of her husband. So then if while her husband liveth she be married to another, she shall be called an Adulteresse.* St. *Paul* knew no way to dissolve marriage but by death: the same he saith, 1 *Cor.* 7: 39. *The wife is bound by the Law as long as her husband liveth but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will.* and if we weigh the force of St *Pauls* argument exactly, we shall find it to be this, That as the bond of the Law could no way be dissolved whiles the Law lived, that is, was not abrogated, notwithstanding any prevarication interceding; so the bond of marriage is indissolvable so long as life lasteth, notwithstanding any interceding fornication. To conclude this point, he that marrieth her that is divorced or put away either justly for fornication, or unjustly without fornication,

committeth

committeth adultery: for if it was justly for fornication; then she was the nocent person, and could not marry again; and if it was unjustly without fornication, then the divorce was void, and she still continued wife to her former husband: howsoever it was, whether justly or unjustly, it can be no adultery, except the bond of the former marriage were dissolved.

Another place we have to the same purpose, 1 *Cor:* 7. 10, 21. *Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband; but if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife.* Either St *Paul* speaks of such a woman who had no just cause of separation, or of one who had: but he cannot be understood to speak of one who had no just cause of separation, for then he would not, he could not have said, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled at her choice, but let her be reconciled and returne to her husband. St *Paul* did not, could not permit any unjust Divorces, contrary to the expresse Word of God. It is plain therefore that he speaks of one who had just cause to depart; and yet St *Paul* commandeth in the name of the Lord, that such an innocent person should remain unmarried.

To these plain testimonies of holy Scripture, we may joyne the evidence of right reason. If married persons could so easily unmarry themselves by the consent of both parties, and much more by the sinister practises of one party? what a Doore would this open to perjuries and subordinations, to the slanders and deflamations of innocent persons, while lewd men pursued their own lusts under the cloake of justice? what division and what ruine would this bring upon families? what a curse would it be to poore children, who (many times without their own faults) must loose one of their naturall parents, and get a step-Father or a step-Mother in their place?

This Conclusion (Mr. *Pressicke*) is evidenced to us by the word of God, by the light of naturall reason, that marriage ought to be kept sacred and undissolvable. It hath been long observed as a Nationall sinne of this people, to have been over easy dissolvers of true marriages, upon slaunderous, or pretended Præ-contracts wanting all ground but lust and perjury: and therefore I do give you the same Counsaile which I take God to witnes I would take

my ſelfe if I were in the ſame condition. Seeke once more to be reconciled to your wife, and forget not to pray God to change her heart: if you cannot prevail, then follow St *Paul's* command or rather God's command by St *Paul*, *to remain unmarried*. You complain of this as a grievous burthen, but you conſider not that many holy Saints and Servants of God have lived much longer under the ſame Croſſe that you have done, and altogether without their own faults. Some have had their Spouſes impriſoned for 30 or 40 years together for conſcience ſake, as I told you formerly of Mr. *Mole*: ſome again have had their husbands made ſlaves by the Turkes, and detained from them as long as they lived: ſome have been ſmitten with an incurable diſeaſe (preſently after Marriage) inconſiſtent with the duties of the marriage-bed: what muſt they doe in theſe caſes and many more of the ſame nature? Preſently marry again, God forbid! This is a better remedy, that is, by fervent and frequent prayer to begge the guifte of continency of God: if we prevail not, it is becauſe we pray amiſs. If it be not a croſſe which we have pulled upon our ſelves, but which God himſelfe hath impoſed upon us we have his promiſe, *that he will hear us, and help us*: let who will whiſper to you other thoughts, Mr. *Preſſicke* this is your remedy.

In your fifth Paragraph you run into one or two errors more, that every ordinary divorce is forbidden as a breach of Gods command: *What God hath joyned together, let no man put aſunder*, *Mat*: 19. 6. and that there is no other cauſe of divorce but fornication.

For firſt, that Text (*Mat*: 19. 6.) is underſtood properly of diſſolving the bond of marriage, (as you would have it) for ever, & not of leſſer ſeparations made out of prudence or piety for a time.

Secondly, there are other cauſes of divorces, beſides fornication, as when one married perſon ſhall ſeek to poyſon or make away the other, or to ſtarve them, it is very lawfull to ſeperate them out of prudence to prevent murther. Judge whether this be not your caſe or no? and when the one perſon is continually inticing the other to Hereſy or blaſpheming; or ſoliciting him or her to ſinne againſt God: in ſuch caſes alſo ſuch a temperary Divorce is lawfull, as no man that underſtands himſelfe will deny.

In the 6 and 7 paragraph, you endeavour to prove your wife a whore

a whore in Scripture-ſence, becauſe ſhe is departed from you, but you miſtake every way. For firſt, in all probability the Levites wife did more then depart from him; and though a Levite might not marry a known whore, yet being married, he might pardon, conceal, or connive at her lewd courſes. But this is nothing to the purpoſe, for this adultery or whoredome for which a man may put away his wife, is not the ſpirituall whoredome, that is, Idolatry; nor civill whoredome, that is, deſertion of her husband: but carnall whoredome, whereby the bond of Marriage is diſſolved, and the innocent party acquited for the future from all Conjugall duties. But to imagine that ſhe who only deſerts her husband, and ſhe who takes another into his bed, are both alike guilty of the breach of wedlocke, and both to be puniſhed with the ſame puniſhment, as you ſay in the 7 paragraph, is ridiculous.

In the concluſion of your diſcourſe you plead for liberty to marry, and urge 4 reaſons for your ſelfe, which if they were all true, ſignify nothing, as to that purpoſe for which you urge them. Suppoſe ſhe have been ſo long abſent; ſuppoſe ſhe cut you in the face; ſuppoſe ſhe were an occaſion that you were impriſoned 25 dayes; ſuppoſe you have a Divorce under two Biſhops hands, upon a reference from his Majeſtie; yet there is a great difference between a temporary divorce, and a perpetuall diſſolution of marriage. What you plead for your ſelfe I have ſeen, what your wife hath to plead for her ſelfe I do not know; but if every thing be as your ſelfe ſay, I cannot give way to your ſecond marriage, whiles your old wife lives, without contradicting the Commands of our Saviour delivered by three Evangeliſts, and one Apoſtle: and therefore I muſt commend you to your proper remedy, that is, prayer, hoping that you will never thinke more of wedding, whilſt your old wife lives, but bear your Croſſe with patience which Chriſt hath laid upon you.

November 16*th*. 1661.

Mr. *Pressicke's* Reply to the Bishop's Answer.

Right reverend Father in God,

I Beseech you once more to hear me with patience, what I have further to say: I have received your Lordships Answer to my paper, and I do humbly conceive it will admit of some Exceptions as followeth,

In the first place, you say (and that truly) that they who expound Scripture according to their own private fancies, do often change: but they (say you) who expound it in the same sence which was delivered to the Catholique Church, with the Scriptures, can hardly vary from themselves.

To this I humbly reply, that you do not declare who you mean by the Catholique Church that we should seek the sence of Scripture from: whether the Church of *Rome*, or the Protestant Church, jointly or severally, or who else we must take for the Church: and therefore I will deliver my opinion which I think is not a private fancy. By Catholique Church I understand all the true Believers that hath been from the beginning of the world, is now, and shall be to the end of the world, of which Catholique Church I am one: and to this Church the Scriptures was given, and none can understand the sence and mind of God in the Scriptures, but such as God doth reveale it unto by his spirit, 1 *Cor*: 1. 9. *As it is written, eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But he hath revealed them to us by his spirit: and we have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know* (observe the words) *that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. But the naturall man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishnes unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* and *Mat*: 10. 27. *No man knowes the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.* I do with all my heart and soul reverence learning, because I find the want of learning in my selfe: and we are debtors to those that have translated the Scriptures into our Mother-tongue: yet such as have naturall learning

learning, and understand the originall Tongues may be in a naturall estate, and in that respect the Apostle saith, they cannot know the things of the spirit of God, for they are fooliſhnes unto him, becauſe they muſt be ſpiritually diſcerned. But I ſay he is a good Scholer that hath learn't his Leſſon of Chriſt: and it matters not who is the ſcholer ſo that Chriſt be the Schoolmaſter: I have never read that Chriſt doth ſpeak to his Children or Scholers only in Hebrew, Greeke, or Lattine, but he hath and doth declare his mind and will to them in Engliſh, and other Languages as well as in the originall Tongues. I hope this is no expounding of Scripture according to private fancy: for it is plain Scripture, if the Scripture be right tranſlated: if it be not, the fault is not mine.

To the firſt objection you own the words of St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor:* 7. 15. *If the unbeliever depart, let him depert: a brother or a ſiſter is not in bondage in ſuch Caſes*: and you ſay there is a great difference between the marriage of Infidells, and the marriage of Chriſtians: the marriage of Infidells being only a civill contract, and may be diſſolved by conſent: the marriage of Chriſtians is a ſigne of the myſticall union between Chriſt and his Church, and therefore (you ſay) undiſſolvable.

To this I reply by plain Scripture, and agree with you that the marriage of Infidells is diſſolvable, if but the one party be an Infidell, and refuſe to co-habit with the husband or wife, as 1 *Cor:* 7. 15. and at verſes 12, 13. If a husband have an unbelieving wife, or a wife an unbelieving husband: if the unbeliever be pleaſed to dwell with the believer, the believer ought not to put the unbeliever away. and though my wife be an unbeliever, and is departed, yet I have waited 6 years, &c. for her returning, before I got a Bill of divorce: and the Text ſaith *if the unbeliever depart, a brother or a ſiter is not in bondage in ſuch caſes*: and you have granted that the marriage of Infidells is diſſolvable by conſent, and ſhe gave her conſent to the divorce: therefore by your own words the bone of marriage is diſſolved between her and me: for this is my caſe, my wife is an Infidell or unbeliever, and hath departed from me above 7 years and 5 months: I did not put her away, but ſhe put her ſelfe away, and by her departing ſhe put me away from her as. *Marke* 10. 12. But St *Paul* ſaith, *If ſhe*

depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband. 1 Cor: 7. 11. the reason is because she is the nocent party, therefore she must remain unmarried or be reconciled: but St. *Paul* doth not say let him remain unmarried, or let him wait 7 years, as I have done, or 17 years to see whether she will be reconciled to her husband or not; but he saiah expressly, ver: 15. if she depart, he is not in bondage in such cases: this is plain Scripture. But what greater outward bondage can there be (if he have need of a wife) than to be restrained from marriage, or in what sence can any man take that Scripture, *a brother or a sister is not in bondage in such cases.* I humbly conceive that to say as you do in another place, that he is freed from all conjugall duties towards her, it is neither the meaning of the Text, nor is the plaister broad enough for the sore: for if she desert him, and will not come at him, nor suffer him to come where she is, what conjugall duties is he like to performe towards her? it is impossible: therefore the text must have another meaning, which I conceive must be this; she breaking the bond and covenant of marriage, and will not be reconciled in so many years, she being an Infidell and giving her consent to that divorce, it doth dissolve the marriage, as your selfe said before, and sets me free to marry as St. *Paul* saith, a brother or a sister is not in bondage in such cases: if you say she is not an infidell, she hath been baptized and is a Christian, I say no, she is no Christian that walkes in practice as my wife hath done. Indeed I must say that so long as persons do outwardly hold and embrace the Christian faith, in Charitie we are bound to esteem them Christians, untill they manifest something to the contrary in their conversations: but when they break their faith and covenant, and all both humane and christian bonds, as my wife hath done, and will not be admonished neither by Ministers nor christian friends, but all Scripture and counsell hath been rejected by her, and she wittingly and maliciously acting against the light of her owne conscience, it is no breach of charity to esteem such an one an Infidell or unbeliever while they so walke: for such an one cannot be said to be a believer in any other sence then the Devill is said to believe and tremble: for if she did believe in any other sence, she durst not act so contrary to the rule of Scripture in breaking faith and covenant

with

with God and her husband; ſhe cannot be ſaid to be a chriſtian, for believers were firſt called chriſtians at *Antioch*: they were firſt believers, and then called chriſtians: but ſome Miniſters have ſaid ſhe is worſe then an infidell, for Infidells act ignorantly, and ſhe acts againſt knowledge.

I grant alſo that the marriage of Chriſtians is a ſigne of the myſticall union between Chriſt and his Church; but that ſuch a marriage is undiſſolvable, I thinke by what you have ſaid it doth not appeare: for to the third Objection you grant that a wife may be divorced for fornication, and I thinke I ſhall by Scripture make it appear, that being divorced for fornication, the innocent party may lawfully marry. To prove this, the beſt way to expound Scripture is to compare Scripture with Scripture: now *Marke* 10. 11. it is ſaid, *Whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery againſt her. and Luke Whoſoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whoſoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery.* theſe Texts you ſay admit of no evaſion, exception; nor reſtriction: but compare them with *Mat*: 19. 3. and they will yeild another ſence. The Phariſes came unto Chriſt tempting him, and ſaying unto him, *is it lawfull for a man to put away his wife for every cauſe.* Chriſts anſwer ſeems to include, as if he ſhould ſay no, it is not lawfull for a man to put away his wife for every cauſe: for if you do, both he that puts her away for every cauſe, and marrieth another, and he that marrieth her that is put away for every cauſe, both of them committeth adultery: this I conceive to be the true meaning of both theſe Texts, the putting away for every cauſe, and marrying another is to commit adultery: and *Moſes* (ſaith he) verſes 8, and 9. *Becauſe of the hardneſſe of your hearts, ſuffered you to put away your wives* for every cauſe: *but I ſay unto you, that whoſoever ſhall put away his wife except it be for fornication, and marry another, committeth adultery.* but without all peradventure, theſe Texts thus compared together, holds forth to us, that if the divorce be for fornication, and not for every cauſe, if he marry another, he doth not commit adultery: for likewiſe *Mat*: 5. 32. *whoſoever ſhall put away his wife except for the cauſe of fornication, cauſeth her to commit adultery.* If he put her away for every cauſe,

but if ſhe be put away for fornication, ſhe is the cauſe of her own adultery, and he is no adulterer if he marry another, is included in theſe words, *except for fornication*, in all the three Evangeliſts: for there cannot be a contradiction between one of them and another, ſpeaking all by one ſpirit: therefore one Text muſt be compared with another to find out the true ſence, and I think it is very clear as above, being thus explained by *Mat:* 19: 3.

I conceive it very clear that being put away for fornication, and not for every cauſe, the innocent party may lawfully marry without ſin: and I do humbly conceive that it was upon this account that the old Lord Primate Doctor *Uſher* and Doctor *Martin* did ſeperate Mr. *Richard Lingart* and his wife after they had 2 or 3 children, and preſently after while the old wife was living he married the Organiſts widow of St. *Patrick's*, and was after Arch-Deacon of *Meath*: all this I can make good.

And I humbly conceive from *Marke* 10. 12. compared with the 1 *Cor:* 7. 15. that it is as cleare that a wife putting away her husband, and departing from him, and will not be reconciled, the husband may as lawfully marry, as if he had put her away for fornication, and ought not to be kept in bondage. *Marke* 10. 12. *If a woman put away her husband and be married to another, ſhe committeth adultery:* but the Evangeliſt doth not ſay that if he marry another, after ſhe is departed and hath put him away, that he committeth adultery, and St. *Paul* ſaith absolutely that he is not in bondage in ſuch caſes: the reaſon I conceive is becauſe the wife ought to be in ſubjection to her husband and not he in ſubjection to her: and therefore the putting him away, and will not be reconciled doth alter the caſe ſo as to ſet the husband free: a brother or a ſiſter is not in bondage in ſuch caſes. For God knowing mans weaknes, and requiring that man ſhould be holy in body and mind, and God knowing Satans ſleights and continuall temptations, ſeeking whom he may devour, it cannot in reaſon be imagined that God would have a man left in ſuch a ſo lorne condition without a Remedy, though the perverſneſſe of a whore or unbeliever: it doth not ſtand with the bounty and goodnes of God to man: it is alſo againſt naturall reaſon, and contrary to Scripture, (*Epheſ:* 5. 24.) that ſaith, *As the Church is in ſubjection*

ject on to Christ, so let the Wives be to their own Husbands in every thing: but if in such cases the Husband be not set free to marry, then must some Husbands be in subjection and bondage to the humours of whores, and some to infidells and unbelevers: and she that was my wife is both in Scripture-sence, and I think sinns in Scripture-sence are of the deepest dye: adde also to this that I have a bill of Divorce, which all considered together, I see not but for all that is yet said against it, I may lawfully marry.

You say, and that truly, I have not hitherto so much as pretended that my wife hath committed actuall adultery.

I reply, the reason why I have not, is want of proofe: for it is a hard matter to prove one a whore though she were never so guilty, but there is as strong presumptions to perswade she is so as possible may be: As first, before she left me, when I told her she did not respect me as a wife ought to do a husband, she said that she looked upon me but as she did upon other men, and no otherwise: which is suspicion enough, to put no difference between her husband and other men. Secondly, it hath been taken notice of by severall that told me, that when she was not imployed in her calling as Midwife, she did frequent the company of those that were reputed for whoredome, the vilest persons in the Citie; and they would sit and drinke Sacke, and jeare her husband. 3ly. She hath been observed to goe in evenings to places suspected for uncleanesse, and those that did observe it teld me. Fourthly, it is reported by many in this Citie that about the beginning of June last, when she was carried in a Horse-litter into the County of Armagh (where she stil remains for any thing I know) she had a French disease upon her: these things added to the former reasons and arguments of Scripture, I thinke what I plead for cannot in reason be denyed me; but it is just and equall in the sight of God and Man that I should have a Lycense to marry.

To return to the second Objection, the law of the Land (you say) I mistake: for if the husband be known to be living, if it were seventeeen years, the wife may not marry; and you instance Mr. Mole was absent 20 years in the Inquisition.

Reply, I say that in equity the benefit of the Law of the land should be allowed me, for what difference is there between being absent 7 years, and not heard off: and to be absent 7 years, if there

be no law (as your Lordſhip ſaid) to require the Delinquent party to her duty, or what benefit hath the one innocent party of their husband or wife more than the other: therefore there is as much equity the one ſhould have liberty as the other. As for Mr. *Mole* his condition and this we ſpeake of, are much different; for Mr. Mole would have come home if he might, and ſhe that was my wife might have come home, and was much ſought to for to come, and ſhe would not; therein the caſe alters. And *Galleatius* being in the ſame condition that I am, as to the abſence of his wife, yet not altogether in the ſame manner, for he left his wife, and my wife left me, and I have a Divorce and he had none, yet the Divines in *Germany* allowed him to marry another: and therefore I ſtill affirme (till better reaſons be ſhewed to the contrary) that both the Law of God, and the example of the Church in *Germany*, and the practice of Dr. *Uſher* and Dr. *Martin* towards Mr. *Lingart* here in *Ireland*, are all for me that I may lawfully marry: and if there be no law to require a wife to performe the duty of a wife, nor to puniſh her for her diſobedience, I ſee not how there can be any Law [in equity] againſt me, to hinder me from marriage.

To come again to the 3 Object on: you bring *Rom.* 7. 2, & 3. verſes. *The woman which hath a husband, is bound by the Law to her husband as long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, ſhe is looſed from the law of her husband: ſo then, if while her husband liveth, ſhe be married to another, ſhe ſhall be called an adultereſs.* and 1 *Cor.* 7. 39. *The wife is bound by the Law as long as the husband liveth.*

Reply, I humbly conceive [under favour] this Argument will not hold out weight in the ballance of the Sanctuary: for if ſhe were put away juſtly for fornication, then the marriage is diſſolved, as I ſhewed before out of the 3 Evangeliſts, that which I thinke will carry it though you ſay marriage cannot be diſſolved. Well, ſhe being juſtly put away for fornication, he that marrieth her committeth uncleanneſſe with her, becauſe ſhe was an Harlot: *What know ye not, that he that is joyned to an harlot is one body, for two ſaith he ſhall be one fleſh:* [1 *Cor.* 6. 15, 16.] *and ſhall I take the members of Chriſt and make them the members of an Harlot, God forbid!* If ſhe were put away unjuſtly for every cauſe, as it ſeems then they uſed to make private divorces without Lycenſe from either Magiſtrate or Miniſter; and herein though ſhe were innocent

nocent as to the cause of divorce, yet she was blame-worthy and guilty of sin, in not appealing to the Governours of the Church or Commonwealth, or to both for justice, and they ought to have relieved her, and required the husband to performe th duty of a husband to her, and not have suffered the Land(by such unlawfull separation) to be polluted: and her neglect of this, and submitting her selfe to an unlawfull private Divorce, makes her & him that marrieth her,both guilty of uncleanneſſe.

But this is not my condition, it is farr different from such proceedings: for I have to my hazard both of life and liberty used all possible means to reclaim her since she left me, but to no purpose, and I have been restrained of my liberty for 25 dayes together, for contending against such private separations: and I have appealed both to Magistrates and Ministers, when the times and persons were so corrupt that I could not have justice, untill the Lord brought home his Majesty, to whom I made my plaint and case known, who upon the reading of my petition gave His Royall Assent that two Bishops should order the matter according to justice: and they considering her long absence, and that the man hath no power over his own body but the woman, and that she had broke the bond of wedlocke in departing so long, and defrauding her husband of due benevolence, which by the bond of marriage she was ingaged to, 1 *Cor*: 3. 3. 4. 5. and that at that present before them she refused to be reconciled; whereupon the two Bishops gave me a bill of Divorce according to 1 *Cor*: 7. 15. *If the unbeliever will depart let her depart, a brother or a sister is not in bondage in such cases*: and *Marke* 10. 12. *If a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery*: which doth imply, as the Text above doth, that he is not in bondage: so that if he upon that account marry another, he doth not commit adultery, because she denies the duty of a wife: and God did ordain that man should not live alone, but should have a helpe meet for him: and therefore if a wife that should be a helpe to him, to keep his vessell in holinesse and honour to God, if she break her Covenant with God and with her husband, shall I be kept in bondage after all this, and the Scriptures say in such cases a man is not in bondage. I pray you is it not contrary both to the Law of God and man, and naturall reason that I

ſhould ſuffer for my wives trangreſſion; if ſhe commit murther, muſt I be hanged for her murther: or if ſhe commit adultery, muſt I do pennance all my life after, to live out of a married condition for her adultery or ſeparating her ſelfe from me, though I have never ſo much need of a wife; this were a ſad pennance indeed for her whoredome. But perhaps you will ſay ſhe is not a whore, I ſay ſhe is in Scripture-ſence, if ſhe be not otherwiſe; and Scripture-ſence is the beſt ſence, and beſt proofe to prove a whore by: for it is very well knowne that according to the Lawes of Men, it is a very hard taske to prove a woman to be a whore: but I have ſhewed you enough before to perſwade reaſonable men that ſhe is no leſſe. I hope the Scriptures ſhall not be ſtreched like Cloth upon tenter-hookes to keep men in ſuch caſes ſtill in bondage: God is more gracious than men, to bind ſuch heavy burthens, and lay them upon mens ſhoulders, which themſelves will not touch with one of their fingers.

You ſay further from the 1 *Cor*: 7. 10, 11. that St *Paul* cannot be underſtood to ſpeak of one who had no juſt cauſe of ſeperation; for then he could not have ſaid, *Let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband.*

Reply. I humbly conceive theſe words will bear another conſtruction, more agreeable to other Scriptures: for you ſpeak of juſt cauſe of ſeparation, for which ſhe ſhould remain unmarried, or be reconciled; but do not tell us what that juſt cauſe might be: if you mean her Husbands fornication or adultery, then the Scripture tells us plainly in the 3 Evangeliſts explained by *Mat*: 19. 3. that upon a lawfull divorce, ſhe needed not to remain unmarried: for being divorced for her Husbands fornication, ſhe might marry; becauſe ſhe could not (upon that account) return again and be reconciled to him, but in ſo doing ſhe ſhould ſin, by making the members of Chriſt the members of an Harlot: 1 *Cor*: 6. 15, & 16. therefore it muſt be ſome inferiour cauſe of ſeparation, as ſome raſh or unadviſed act, for which ſhe might depart for a time, and remain unmarried untill her husbands rage or anger were paſt, and they reconciled again. And I do humbly conceive, that where a Text will bear a double conſtruction, it is moſt agreeable to the mind and will of God to expound it in that ſence, that in obſerving thereof perſons may be preſerved as much as may be from temptations

tions to ſin; rather than to expound it in ſuch a ſence as by obſerving thereof perſons ſhall be laid open to moſt horrid temptations to ſin: and I do verely believe that the late Lord Primate and Dr. *Martin* did ſeperate Mr. *Lingart* and his wife upon this account; which Mr. *Lingart* about 3 or 4 months after married another wife, while the firſt was living; which if it had not been lawfull to have been done, I preſume thoſe precious ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt Dr. *Uſher* and Dr. *Martin* would not have ſuffered it to have been done.

In the next place you ſay it is evidenced by right reaſon that if perſons could ſo eaſily unmarry themſelves, what a doore it would open to perjuries, ſubordinations, and ſlaundees of innocent perſons, &c.

Reply. This is as if Children ſhould not have bread becauſe ſometimes Doggs ſnatch it from them. Shall the Children of God be debarred their lawfull liberty for fear the Children of Beliall ſhould draw falſe Concluſions from ſound Principles: or ſhall innocents be puniſhed with tranſgreſſors for company. If my caſe were weighed in the ballance of right reaſon, I could not be denied my deſire: how have I purſued all lawfull means that could be invented and procured (Doctors of Divinity, and Miniſters, and Chriſtian friends) to perſwade my wife to own me as a Husband, and ſhe would not, nor ſhew any reaſon but her own will: and I have ſhewed your Lordſhip (in my other paper) four ſeverall reaſons, that if I have a Lycence to marry, yet no wicked perſon can make my condition a preſident for them to follow.

I grant as you ſay it is evidenced by the Word of God and the light of naturall reaſon, that Marriage ought to be kept ſacred and undiſſolvable; it ought ſo: but if one party break the Bond, it is againſt the Word of God and the light of naturall reaſon, that the innocent party ſhould be puniſhed all his life long for the Nocents tranſgreſſion. What you ſay of Mr. *Mole* or others comes not near my caſe: for as I ſaid before they would have come home, if they might; and my wife might have come if ſhe would, and has been as much ſolicited to come as might be, and this was *Galleatius* caſe, his wife would not come at him, for which the Divines in *Germany* ſuffered him to marry while the firſt wife was living.

To my fourth Objection you are ſilent, which was to this effect that ſeing it doth appear for any thing that is yet ſaid againſt it

that according to the Word of God, that he whose wife commiteth adultery, and he whose wife departeth from him and denies the duty of a wife, as mine hath done th s7 years and 5 months, may lawfully marry: and I have shewed you that Dr. *Usher* and Dr. *Martin* did allow it, and the Church in *Germany* and New-*England* hath allowed marriage in such cases: then I say if there be no law to compell a wife (deserting her husband) to her duty, nor to punish her for her disobedience, and if there be any law of men to restrain the Husband in such a case from marriage, then whether is that Law that restrains him a just law, according to the Word of God? or whether is it not rather against the Word of God, and the practice of other Churches: and a binding of mens Consciences to insupportable burthens? and whether is not such a Law (if any such there be) a setting of their thresholds against God's thresholds, and their posts by his posts *Ezek*: 43. 8. compared with *Isa*: 29. 13. Their fear towards me is taught by the precepts of men. Indeed I know not of any such Law, my study hath been more in Divinitie, neither did I ever know where to get a Booke of Canons to acquaint my selfe with that Law: but it seems strange to me if amongst all the Canons there be none to punish a Husband or wife that refuseth to performe the duty of a Husband or wife.

To my 5 Argument, you say I run into one or two errors more, *viz*: That every ordinary Divorce is forbidden as a breach of Gods command, *What God hath joyned together, let not man put asunder*: *Mat*: 19. 6. and that I say there is no other cause of Divorce but only fornication.

Reply. This heavy charge of one or two errors, I shall easily wipe off; for I do not say there is no other cause of Divorce but fornication; for I said in my other paper, and I say in this, that an unbelieving wife departing from her Husband, and denying the duty of a wife, and will not be reconsiled to her husband, it is cause of divorce as well as fornication, if the Scripture may be believed before private fancy. 1 *Cor*: 7. 3, 4, 5, 11, 15. *If the unbeliever depart, a brother or a sister is not in bondage in such cases.* Nay I thinke it is no false Exposition to say further, that whether she be a believer or unbeliever, if she depart, and persist in it, and will not be reconciled, it is cause of divorce; otherwise the Apostle would have said a brother or a sister is not in bondage in such

ſuch a caſe, in the ſingular number, in caſe of the unbelievers departing: but he ſaith A brother or a ſiſter is not in bondage in ſuch caſes; ſpeaking of more caſes than one: which may well be underſtood not only of an unbelievers departing, but in the like caſe of a believers departing, if ſhe continue obſtinate and unreconcilable, a brother or a ſiſter is not in bondage in ſuch caſes.

Further you ſay that Text *Mat*: 19: 6. is underſtood properly of diſſolving the bond of marriage for ever, (as you ſay I would have it) and not of leſſer ſeparations made out of prudence or piety for a time. I ſaid before and I ſay ſtill that except the Biſhops made that Divorce between me and my wife, upon the account of my wifes being a whore in Scripture-ſence, or elſe upon account of her departing and not performing the duty of a wife, one or both, as I writ to them of the lawfulnes of ſuch a Divorce, and of the Germine Divines allowing the like to *Galeatius*, before they made this Divorce: I ſhewed theſe reaſons why I deſired it, or elſe to have my wife to live with me, which ſhe before them did refuſe. I ſay except they made this Divorce upon this account, which you ſay diſſolves marriage for ever, the Biſhops muſt needs fall under the breach of that preeept, *Thoſe whom God hath joyned together, let no man put aſunder*: for this divorce cannot be underſtood (as your Lordſhip ſpeaks) of leſſer ſeparations for a time, but of a perpetuall Divorce: for the Biſhops bound us in five hundred pound Bonds apeece, that we ſhould not owne one the other, nor one the others eſtate; and bid us to take leave of one another as if one of us were going to the grave: therefore it cannot be underſtood of a leſſer Divorce for a time, but of a perpetuall diſſolution of marriage for ever, or elſe the Biſhops ſtand guilty of the breach of that precept, *Mat*: 19 6. Thus, both according to the Word of God, and the Lawes of men, I mean the Biſhops and His Majeſties Royall aſſent, the bond of marriage is diſſolved; what hinders then but I may have Lycence to marry: and whereas I ſay there can be no divorce from bed and board (as ſome call it) *except it be with conſent for a time, and come together again, leaſt Satan tempt them to incontinency.* 1 *Cor*: 7. 5. but it is abſolutely againſt this and that precept *Mat*: 19. 6. and 1 *Cor*: 7. 3, 4, 5. I beſeech you let not this be condemned for an error which is juſtified by Scripture. For your diſtinctions of tempo-

rary Divorces and leſſer ſeperations & divorces of prudence and piety, I find no ſuch diſtinctions of Divorces in Scripture; and I dare not pinne my faith upon any mans opinion without Scripture-proofe: I pray you bear with my plainneſſe, for I have read in an ancient Author, that one Lay-man bringing Scripture to prove his aſſertion, was to be preferred before a whole Counſell that decreed things without warrant from Scripture: and I read of no ſuch Divorces in Scripture, except it be for every cauſe, *Mat*: 19. 3. and that Chriſt himſelfe condemns as unlawfull. And if any married perſons ſhould be ſo deſperately wicked as to endeavour to kill, or poiſon or intice to Hereſie or Blaſphemy, or the like, the Mageſtrates by Law may take order and ſecure the innocent party, without making Divorces not warrantable by Scripture, and which oftentimes proves a bane to the innocent party, and binds him to more bondage then the Nocent.

To the 6 & 7 Arguments where I prove my wife to be a whore in Scripture-ſence, you ſay I miſtake: for it is probable the Levites wife did more then depart, and though a Levite might not marry a known whore; yet being married, he might pardon, or conceal, or connive at her lewd courſes.

Reply. I conceive it not ſo much as probable that ſhe did any more than depart without his conſent, that was enough: for the Scripture mentions not that ſhe did any more, for whichſhe was called a whore: for if ſhe had been an actuall whore ſhe ſhould by the Law have been ſtoned to death, *Levit*: 20. 10. neither had it been lawfull for him to have taken her again, *Levit*: 21. 7. and I ſay he could not pardon nor connive at her lewd courſes ſo as to take her again: 1 *Cor*: 6. 13, 15, 16. *The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord. What, know ye not that your bodies are the members of Chriſt? ſhall I then take the members of Chriſt and make them the members of an harlot, God forbid! What, know ye not that he th t is joyned to an harlot is one body, for two (ſaith he) ſhall be called one fleſh.* Theſe Scriptures ſhews plainly, that if a believers wife playes the Harlot, he ought not, nor cannot (without grievous ſin) joyne himſelfe to her again; for in ſo doing he diſhonours Chriſt and makes his members the members of an Harlot. Now if ſuch an innocent party have not liberty to marry, then is he (for his wifes ſinne) in perpetuall bondage all his life after, except he will

joyne

joyne with his wife again, and so make the members of Christ the members of an Harlot: but as for my wife, if I would, she would not owne me as a Husband: I desire it may be better considered of for to say, that neither for civill whoredome [as you call a wifes deserting her Husband] nor carnall whoredome doth free the husband no further then from conjugall duties, is such a distinction as I am assured is not suitable to Scripture, Grace, and Believers priviledges: those that thus deal with men, do as much as in them lyeth to provoke them to incontinency: but as I said before Dr. *Usher* & Dr *Martin* dealt not so with Mr. *Lingan*, for without doubt if either the wife desert her Husband, or play the harlot, for they are both one in Scripture-sence, the innocent party may lawfully marry rather than burne; and those that hinder such, must answer for their sinns, if they transgresse; and all men have not the gift of continencie.

Then you that to imagine that she who deserts her Husband, and she who takes another into his bed, are both alike guilty of the breach of wedlock, and both to be punished with the same punishment, as you charge me to say, it is you say ridiculous.

Reply. My Lord, if you look back upon my paper again, you will find it is your mistake and not mine: for I do not name carnall whoredome, of a womans taking another into her Husbands bed; but this I said, that spirituall whoredome, forsaking the Lord, and that which you call civill whoredome, a wife deserting her Husband, God threatens to punish both with one and the same punishment, *Ezek*: 16.38. and if this be ridiculous to speak in Scripture language, I know not how to please men; but the Apostle hath taught me, that if I yet seek to please men, I should not be the servant of Christ: *Galat*: 1.10. But now being put to it I will say something to the Charge: I do conceive that Blasphemy and spirituall whoredome [which is forsaking the Lord] being sinns committed immediately against God, are as great sinns, if not greater then those sinns committed against men, suppose it to be carnall whoredome or other: and if so that spirituall whoredome be as great a sin as carnall whoredome, and a wife deserting her Husband to be punished with the same punishment, that spirituall whoredome is to be punished with; then a wife deserting her Husband ought to be punished with the same punishment that carnall whoredome is punished with, be it Divorce,

or what elſe, except you will make carnall whoredome a greater ſin then ſpirituall whoredome, and I thinke this is not ridiculous: for a wife departing, and will not be reconciled, it is a breach of wedlocke, becauſe the Husband hath not power over his own body, but the wife: and ſhe ought to render him due benevolence: yea, it is ſuch a ſin as God will puniſh with the ſame puniſhment as he doth ſpirituall whoredome, *Ezek*: 16. 38. *I will judge thee as women that break wedlock, and ſhed blood, are judged.*

You grant that the marriage of Chriſtians is a ſigne of the myſticall union between Chriſt and his Church: then I ſay from this union (*Epheſ*: 5. 32.) we may draw this Concluſion, that a wife forſaking her Husband, and will not be reconciled, it is in Scripture-ſence Harlotry or whoredome, as forſaking the Lord is called ſpirituall whoredome: *Iſa*: 1. 4. compared with the 21. *They have forſaken the Lord, How is the faithfull Citie become an Harlot.* ſo a wife forſaking her husband, and forgetting the Covenant of her God, or promiſe of Marriage, *Prov*: 2. 17. is there called a Harlot: and *Jerem*: 3. 3. compared with 20. *Thou hadſt a whores forehead, thou refuſedſt to returne, as a wife treacherouſly departeth from her Husband.* Now thus to depart (as mine hath done this 7 years and 5 months) is a breach of wedlocke, *Cor*: 7. 3, 4, 5. for ſhe ought to be in ſubjection to her Husband as the Church is to Chriſt, *Epheſ*: 5. 24. by the myſticall union that is between Chriſt and his Church, which marriage is a ſigne of: but here I ſhall forbear to proceed any further, for I think I have made it clear enough to any indifferent man that may read it, both by Scripture and ſound Arguments, that I ought to be ſet free and have Lycenſe to marry, which I hope your Lordſhip will grant me; otherwiſe I ſhall humbly beg your Lordſhips Rejoinder, to know what further reaſons can be alledged againſt me, I remain

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your Lordſhips moſt humble and unworthy ſervant

George Preſſicke.

Having proceeded thus farre, and sent him my Reply, about a week or ten dayes after I went to him, to know if I should expect any further satisfaction to the Question, but received none: for with a frowning countenance he said. What do you thinke that you have received the Spirit to expound the Scripture more than other men? Do you thinke you have a Cloven-head upon yours? (what he meant by Cloven-head, I leave others to judge:) I do protest (saith he) the Paper I have given you already, is my Judgement; which I will live and dye in. But how unlikely that Paper is to satisfie a scrupulous Conscience, let them that read it, and the Reply to it, judge. As for me I cannot live by an implicite faith; for I am like the *Bereans*, *Acts* 17. 11. One that can beleive nothing (though delivered by an Apostle) without searching the Scriptures daily whether those things be so: and if I be mistaken I would be thankfull to any, that in the spirit of meekness would by Scripture-arguments and reason shew me my mistake, for as yet it is not done: and there are both Bishops and Ministers of very eminent Guifts & learning, of the same Judgement with me in this point, that it is lawfull for me to marry.

Suppose the Church of *Rome*, and some few Protestants are of opinion that divorced persons may not marry; I do conceive I am not bound to submit to their Judgement, becaufe I find both the Word of God, and the practice of Protestant Churches hath allowed the innocent party to marry: and as *Peter* & *John* said *Acts* 4. 19. *Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto them more than unto God*, judge ye.

To what I have said, I shall adde this, I have been credibly informed that about the beginning of the Rebellion in *Ireland*, Lievtenant Coll: *Henson* sued out a Divorce before Arch-Deacon *Buckley* in *Dublin*, and after he was divorced, while the first wife was living, the Arch-Deacon himselfe did joyne the said Liev: Collonell and another woman together in marriage: and was this lawfull then, and is it not lawfull now: and was it thought lawfull by the late Reverend Lord Primate Dr. *Usher* (whom all *Europe* reverenced for piety & learning) and Dr. *Martin* to seperate Mr. *Lingart* and his wife, and presently after Mr. *Lingart* married another while the first wife was living, and is it not lawfull for me now, being divorced by His Majesties Royall Assent: and was

it thought lawfull by the Proteſtant Church in *Germany* to ſuffer *Galleatius* to marry another, becauſe his wife would not live with him, though he had no Divorce; and is it not lawfull for me now to marry that hath a Divorce, and my wife hath forſaken me 7 years and 5 months. What an Iron-age is this that we live in? I could inſtance ſome ſuch like paſſages as theſe above, that hath been allowed of in Englaud; but I forbear, I thinke here is enough to ſatisfy reaſonable men that reads it.

Thus much I thought I was bound in Conſcience to declare to the world, to clear my ſelfe from ſcandall, before I would take another wife, to prove the lawfullnes thereof as you ſee I have done both by Scripture, and reaſon, and the practice of Proteſtant Churches, leſt any through ignorance ſhould ſay, I practice that my ſelfe I condemne in others; becauſe I have ſet forth in a Booke, the practice of Anabiptiſts in *Germany*, who had many wives at once: but I have had none almoſt this eight years, but only the name of one untill I got a Divorce. And thoſe that can procure *Zanty*'s Booke, and read him upon Divorce both for Adultery & Deſertion, may be further informed of the innocent parties liberty to marry in ſuch caſes: and I may juſtly ſay I have had the advice of twenty Biſhops, Doctors and Miniſters, and none but this Biſhop ſpoke againſt it, but all concluded that it was lawfull for me to marry.

George Preſſicke.

Certain Quæries touching the ſilencing of Godly Miniſters, &c.

John 3. 3. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a man be borne again he cannot enter into the Kingdome of God.*

I Obſerve from this Text, firſt, that no man living and dying in that naturall condition in which he is born, except he dye in Infancie, for to ſuch there may be by the free grace of God, a ſecret imputation of the merits & righteouſneſſe of Jeſus Chriſt, imputed unto them for ſalvation: but thoſe that live to years, and are capable to underſtand when they are taught, except they be regenerated and borne again, *they cannot ſee the Kingdome of God*: that is, *they cannot enter into the Kingdome of God.*

Secondly, I obſerve out of *John* 10. and *Romans* 10. that the ordinary means that God hath ordained to worke faith and converſion in ſuch as ſhall be ſaved, is the Miniſtry of the Word; that is the Word of God preached. *Ro*: 10. 14, 15. *How ſhall they hear without a preacher; and how ſhall they preach except they be ſent.* that is ſuch as God ſends, and furniſheth with Guifts rightly to divide the word, and to bring out of Gods treaſure things new & old, and to give every one their portions in due ſeaſon: that is, comfort to whom comfort belongs, to edify and build them up in their moſt holy faith: and reproofe and reprehenſion to whom it belongs, to tell *Iſraell* his trangreſſions, and the houſe of *Jacob* their ſinns, that at the day of Judgement when the Bookes of mens Conſciences ſhall be opened, their condemnation may appear to be juſt; that they were inſtructed in the truth which they rejected and dehorted from: and were reproved for their ſinfull wayes, they walked into their owne deſtruction. Such faithfull Paſtors may ſay as *Iſaiah*, *Iſa*: 8. 18. *Behold here am I and the children that thou haſt given me*: or that thou haſt made me inſtrumentall by my Miniſtry to them in the worke of their Converſion: when idle Drones, and dumme Doggs, and covetous Cormorants that ſeek the fleece more than the flock, and to pleaſe men more than God, which run before they are ſent, for filthy-Lucres-ſake, theſe will

have nothing to say for themselves, but wish the Mountains and Rocks to fall upon them, and cover them, from the face of him that sits upon the Throne, &c.

Thirdly, I have observed with grief of heart, and I humbly desire it may be seriously considered off by all whom it doth or may concern, that many godly and faithfull Ministers, such as no man can deny but they have been instrumentall by their Ministry to the conversion of many souls, but they are now silenced, and not suffered to preach, for refusing subscription to that which they say is part of it the Ordinances of men, and not agreeing with the Ordinances of God, and they are forbidden to plow with an Oxe and an Asse together: and they say it is very rare, if ever there were any soul converted by the reading of that Forme of Prayer only; but they can make it appear that many hundreds have been converted by the preaching of the Word only, which they are hindred from the exercising of their guifts in; though many of them would be glad they might be suffered to preach in Places that are vacant, though they had nothing for their pains: and they say that Preaching being an Ordinance of Divine institution: and those things they refuse to subscribe (they say) is but part of Divine and part of Humane institution: and therefore they think they have not equall dealing that they are silenced from preaching for not reading such a Forme of Common-Prayer, &c. and so many preferred as hath been, that many of them could scarce ever preach, but read only: and they desire it may be considered of, whether the profit that comes by the latter will countervail the dammage of prohibiting the former from preaching in these sinfull gloomy dayes, and places of ignorance; and which might be the most probable and powerfull means the most to advance Gods glory, and to convince sinners and turne them from their sinns: is it because they cannot see with other mens eyes, that they may not be allowed to worship God in his own instituted Ordinances, without subscribing to the Ordinances of Men? as to read *Apocripha* instead of Canonicall Scripture, of which *Apocrypha* they say some part of it, seems to be untrue; as to instance one place, *Tobit* 12 chap: appointed to be read for the first Lesson at evening Prayer the fourth of *October*. In the 5 chap: & 4 verse, *Tobias* went to seek a man to go with him to *Media*,

and

and he found *Raphaell* (saith that verse) that was an Angell: and verse the 12. he calls himselfe *Azarias* the son of *Ananias* the great, and of thy Brethren, saith he to *Tobit*: and verse the 13. *Tobit* saith, he knew his father *Ananias*, when they went together to *Jerusalem* to worship: and chap: 12. verse 15. He calls himselfe again *Raphaell*, one of the seven Angells which presents the prayers of the saints. Now this is contrary to the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, and all our Protestant Churches, that Angells should present the Saints Prayers, and so become their Mediator or Intercessor; we leave that to Papists, for we own no Mediator or Intercessor between God & Man, but the Man *Christ Jesus*. Thus you see he calls himselfe *Azarias* the son of *Ananias*, and of *Tobit*'s Brethren; and in another place he calls himselfe *Raphaell* one of the seven Angells. Now they say, that the imposing of this and such like, instead of Canonical Scripture, makes them that they cannot subscribe; for God is not worshipped with Mens hands, nor with mens tongues, except it be in a way of his own institution: *He will be sanctified in all that draw near unto him.* I could say much more, but I forbear, for a word to the wise is suffic ent.

For my own particular, I conceive a Litturgy in the Church is very usefull, that ignorant persons that cannot pray, may by often reading and hearing it read, learne to pray in a forme of Prayer: yet I think it should be such as both the Prayers and Lessons to be read, should be suitable to Canonicall Scripture; and not such as is mentioned before: and so composed for matter and manner, as other parts of Gods worship be not hindred.

But from what hath been said, this Question may arise, *vizt.*

Whether the silencing of Godly Ministers be not very near of kin to the killing of the two Witnesses? spoken of *Revelation* 11. chapter, and 3 & 7 verses.

For with submission to better Judgements, it is humbly conceived, that by the two Witnesses is signified, all the faithful Preachers and Professors of the Truth which in all Ages have opposed Popery, and all other Heresies. They are called Witnesses, because they bear Witnes to the Truth, and they are said to be but

two, becauſe two is the leaſt number in bearing witnes, *In the mouth of two or three Witneſſes, ſhall every word ſtand.* And this Prophecy did foretell, that popery and Herefy ſhould ſo generally prevail, that few in compariſon of the adverſe party ſhould oppoſe them. Theſe Witneſſes are ſaid to prophecy in ſackcloth, ſignifying the mournful condition they ſhould be in, by the prevailing power of their adverſaries, that they ſhould lead a ſorrowfull life in this world, *they ſpend not their time in Jollity, nor worldly Pompe, and bravery*: and verſe the 4, they are compared to two Olive trees; for by the preaching of Gods Word the oyle of the Spirit is dropt into tender penitent hearts: and they are compared to two Candleſticks, that as the Candleſtick bears the Candle to give light to others, ſo faithfull Preachers holds forth the light of Gods Word in time of greateſt darknes. And whereas it is ſaid that theſe two Witneſſes were killed by their adverſaries, we muſt take notice that there are ſeverall ſorts of killing, beſides the killing with the ſword: there is a killing with the tongue as well as with the Hand, calling Men, Schiſmatick, Obſtinate, Turbulent, and Peſtilent perſons, which cannot be proved that they are ſuch: and St. *John* tell us, 1 *John* 3. 15. That. *Whoſoever hateth his brother is a murtherer, and ye know that no murtherer hath eternall life abiding in him*, and verſe 14. *He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death.* and ſaith our Saviour, *He that ſaith to his brother*, thou fool, *ſhall be in danger of Hell fire.* But if there were love amongſt Brethren, there would be more bearing and forbearing offor infirmities, and ſcruples of Conſcience, for which they dare not ſubſcribe, &c.

A ſecond Quærie may be this, vizt.

Whether the making of the Image of the Beaſt that had the wound of a ſword, and did live. *Revel*: 13. 14. be not meant of the erecting of an externall Forme of Eccleſiaſticall Government, like ſome Government that had been before: and what Government this making of the Image of the Beaſt is, I deſire to know: For the beaſt himſelfe is ſaid in the 6 verſe, to blaſpheme God, and his Tabernacle; that is his Church and People: and in the 7 verſe, He is ſaid to make warre with the Saints, and overcome them; that is, with the temporall ſword, though they overcome him

him with the ſpirituall ſword, and it is ſaid in the 8 verſe, that the power of the Beaſt ſhould be ſo great, that all that dwell upon the Earth ſhould worſhip him. that is, by ſubmitting to his Edicts & Government, even all under his juriſdiction or Dominion, whoſe Names are not written in the Booke of Life. It is ſaid after, that ſuch as would not ſubmit to his Government, muſt neither buy nor ſell, they muſt not enjoy thoſe priviledges that others do that do ſubmit.

Some ſay that by the Beaſt mentioned in the firſt verſe of this Chapter) that riſe out of the Sea, which had 7 Heads and ten Horns is meant the Romane Empire: and by the ſecond beaſt, that riſe out of the Earth, that had two Horns like the Lambe, but ſpake like the Dragon: (verſe the 11.) is meant, the Pope in his height. Again others thinke that by both theſe Beaſts, is meant the Pope; whoſe one and the ſame Perſon is deſcribed under a double reſemblance of two Beaſts: for Anti-chriſt alone is a double Head; in reſpect of his Civill power, he is the firſt beaſt; and in reſpect of his Spirituall or Eccleſiaſticall power he is the ſecond beaſt. Or if you will, He is the firſt beaſt in regard of the wound he received by the *Gothes*, *Vandalls*, and *Hunnes*: and he is the ſecond Beaſt, as he was exalted in his height, when his deadly wound was healed, and the *Gothes*, &c. deſtroyed, and the Pope riſe to have great poſſeſſions of Cities and Lands: for he exerciſed all the power of the firſt Beaſt. Take it in what ſence you will. For by his two Hornes is meant both Civill & Eccleſiaſticall power; for by the ſword which the Pope doth exerciſe, he commands obedience to his Eccleſiaſticall Decrees as verſe 16. 17. *He cauſed all both ſmall and great, rich and poor, bond and free to receive a Marke in their right hand, or in their fore-head. And that no man might buy or ſell, ſave he that had the Marke, or the Name of the beaſt, or the number of his Name.* Now by the Marke of the beaſt in the fore-head, or right hand, ſome thinke is meant to profeſſe and practiſe the Lawes, Religion, and Decrees that are commanded: and thoſe that will not ſubmit thereunto, muſt not buy nor ſell. Now this ſecond Beaſt exerciſing all the power of the firſt beaſt, and commanding an Image of the Beaſt to be made, which Image muſt be ſomething that doth reſemble, or is

like unto the beast: and if the Marke in the fore-head or right hand, ſignifie the profeſſion and practice of the Lawes, Religion and Decrees of the Beast: then what is meant by the Image of the beast, that they muſt not buy nor ſell that have not the Beasts marke? and whether it have no relation to the ſilencing of Preachers, that do not ſubſcribe their Canonicall obedience, I deſire to be reſolved, and would be much ingaged to thoſe that would take the pains to do it.

For, certain it is, many pecious ſoules are at a ſtand, and know not what way to turne themſelves, to ſee ſo many eminent Perſons, which they dare not thinke but there is ſomething of God in both Parties, and yet they are at ſuch a diſtance in their practice and affections, and that for a ſmall *Punctilio*, or as the Holy-Ghoſt ſaith, *They make a man an offender for a word*; or for omiſſion of ſome ſmall matters, which they that urge them, will not ſay that either ſalvation or damnation doth depend upon the doing, or not doing of them: and yet for omiſſion thereof, their mouthes ſhall be ſtopt from preaching; and in ſome ſence ſalvation or damnation depends upon preaching. *Rom*: 10. 14. *How ſhall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard: and how ſhall they hear without a Preacher, &c.* For preaching is the outward ordinary means that God hath ordained to worke Converſion in ſuch as he will ſave: for where Viſion faileth, the people periſh: and by the preaching of the Word alſo, thoſe that are not reformed, their condemnation will appear to be juſt. And thoſe that do not preach, and thoſe that hinders others from preaching, ſee what the Scripture ſaith, *Ezek*: 33. 6. *If any man be taken away in his iniquity, for want of warning, his blood will God require at the Watchmens hands*: both he that ſhould, and doth not preach, and he that hinders others from preaching. Let no man ſay, I take upon me to teach, for what I do is but (as the Apoſtle ſaith,) 2 *Pet*: 3. 2. *To ſtirre up your pure minds by way of remembrance, though ye know theſe things*: for I heartily deſire peace and unity, and that all men would remember and practice St. *Paul's* exhortation, *Coloſ*: 3. 13. *To forbear one another, and to forgive one another: and if any man have a quarrell againſt any, even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye.* Or elſe; how can any man pray the Lords Prayer? a Hea-

then

then may ſay it, but no man can pray it, but ſuch as are willing to paſſe by their Brethrens failings and infirmities: *For if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your treſpaſſes.* And theſe Men (we ſpeake of) ſay, that if they treſpaſſe againſt Men in denying to ſubſcribe Canonicall obdience, it is, fearing they ſhould treſpaſſe againſt God if they ſhould do it, becauſe they cannot do it of faith, and whatſoever is not of faith, is ſin: *and whether it be right in your ſight, to obey Men rather than God*, judge ye.

A third Quæriemay be this, vizt.

Whether the ſilencing of Godly Miniſters, have not ſome relation to the cauſing of the daily Sacrifice to ceaſe, that hath been offered up daily to God: and how do men thinke God will take it, *Whoſe voice once ſhooke the Earth*; *Heb*: 12. 26, 27. *but now he hath promiſed ſaying, Yet once more, I ſhake not the Earth only, but alſo Heaven: and this word*, yet once more, *ſignifieth the removing of thoſe things that are ſhaken, as of things that are made*, [which ſome thinke the things that are made, are to be underſtood of all Humane Inventions in Divine Worſhip,] *that the things that are not made, may remain*: that is, thoſe things that are of Divine Inſtitution, ſhall remain: Men, nor Divells, nor all the Powers of Darkeneſſe ſhall not be able to prevaile againſt that which is of Divine Inſtitution, when all Humane Inventions, in point of Divine Worſhip, ſhall be removed, according to this Promiſe.

If any ſhould thinke or ſay, that I make my ſelfe too buſy to propound ſuch Queſtions, give me leave to anſwer ſuch, That I do but propound my Queſtion to men: and yet I find *Jeremiah* in the 12 chap: in ſuch an evill time as this, when God had warned the Prophet, chap: 7. verſe 16. and chap 11. verſe 14. That he ſhould not pray for that people for their good, for he would not hear him for them; yet even then did *Jeremiah* (chap: 12. verſe 1.) propound a queſtion to God: *Wherefore doth the way of the wicked proſper? wherefore are all they happy that deal treacherouſly?* meaning that they were happy as to their outward eſtate in the world. *For* (ſaith he) *thou haſt planted them, and they have taken root, and grow: thou art near their mouth, and farr from their reins.* Then God anſwers *Jeremiah*, ver: 6. *Even thy brethren, and the houſe*

of

of thy Father, they have dealt treacherously with thee; they have called a multitude after thee: and verse 10. *Many Pastours have destroyed my Vineyard, they have troden down my portion under foot: they have made [illegible] portion a desolate wilderresse: and being desolate it mourn [illegible]* and verses 13, 14. *They have sowen wheat, but shall reap thorns: For thus saith the Lord against all mine evill neighbours, that touch mine Inheritance, which I have caused my people Israell to inherit, Behold I will pluck them out of their Land,* and no marvell if God pluck them out, when they had pluct God's people out first: for he that toucheth them, toucheth the Apple of his eye. I am loath to trouble the Reader with too much, untill I see how this will be accepted: and now all those that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, I commend you to God, and to the word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified.

By *George Pressicke.*

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